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CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
jeff.mammenga@state.sd.us

New State Historical Society book offers glimpse into the early Gold Rush era

PIERRE, S.D.—Award-winning historian Paul L. Hedren discovered Captain Jack Crawford's newspaper articles and letters from the 1870s Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War and was instantly captivated. Captain Jack's words, which create a fascinating window into that time, have now been published by the South Dakota State Historical Society Press as *Ho! For the Black Hills*.

In 1875, Captain Jack joined the Dodge Expedition into the Black Hills of Dakota Territory, from where he penned letters to the *Omaha Daily Bee*. Not content with accompanying Dodge, Captain Jack returned to the Black Hills in 1876 for a further six months.

John Wallace Crawford, who became better known as Captain Jack, wrote a vibrant account of this tumultuous era in the American West. His correspondence featured his adventures as he played the parts of reporter, plainsman, scout, and raconteur. Captain Jack informed his readers, in great detail and with an eye for the unusual and intriguing, of the relative merits of the gulches, the vagaries and difficulties of travel in the region, the art of survival in what was essentially wilderness, the hardships of inclement weather, trouble with outlaws, and interactions with American Indians.

Hedren has compiled these almost unknown letters, writing an introduction and essays. The result is a treasure trove of hitherto hidden primary documents as well as a ripping yarn in the traditions of the Old West.

Hedren, of Omaha, Neb., is a retired National Park Service superintendent. A lifelong student of the 19th-century regular army and the Indian wars of the northern plains, Hedren is the award-winning author of 10 books, including *First Scalp for Custer* and *After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country*.

Ho! For the Black Hills can be purchased for \$29.95 in hardcover (plus shipping and tax where applicable) direct from the South Dakota State Historical Society Press by contacting (605) 773-6009, emailing orders@sdshspress.com, or visiting www.sdshspress.com. The book can also be purchased from most bookstores and online retail sites.

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The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage

Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.